

"Stand to Your Glasses"

Article by J. Lighter and J. Patrick

"**Stand to Your Glasses**" is a name used informally by folklorists to designate a family of mostly anonymous English-language songs that became traditional in various guises from about the middle of the 19th Century, chiefly among male collegiate and military singers. All variants have in common a stanza or refrain very like this:

*So stand to your glasses steady!
This world is a world of lies.
Drink to the dead already,
Hurrah for the next that dies!*

The progenitor of the family is an eight-stanza poem by "W. F. Thompson, Esq.," which appeared in the British East India Company's "literary keepsake," the *Bengal Annual...for MDCCCXXXV*. Though initially titled "Indian Revelry," texts of the poem, either complete or fragmentary, have been published as "The Last Carouse" and "Revelry of the Dying," among less frequently given titles. Various folk adaptations are often called "Stand to Your Glasses," a phrase frequently repeated in Thompson's poem.

The lyrics are commonly and erroneously attributed to the Irish-American journalist Bartholomew Dowling (1823-63). The words of "Dowling's" poem were widely known to students at American and British colleges from the 1860s on. Undoubtedly the best known rendition of the song today is that in the film [*The Dawn Patrol*](#) (1938), set at a Royal Flying Corps aerodrome during World War I. The director, Howard Hawks, explained in an interview that he had learned the song from a Princeton University student in 1919.

Earliest Appearance of the Poem

The earliest known appearance of the poem is titled "Indian Revelry" in *The Bengal Annual* (1835) with an eight-stanza text:

We meet 'neath the sounding rafter
And the walls around are bare;
As they shout to our peals of laughter
It seems that the dead are there.
So stand to your glasses! steady!
We drink in our comrades' eyes
A cup to the dead already--
Hurrah! for the next that dies.

Not here are the goblets glowing,
Not here is the vintage sweet;

'Tis cold, as our hearts are growing,
And dark, as the doom we meet.
But stand to your glasses! steady!
And soon shall our pulses rise;
Here's a cup to the dead already--
Hurrah! for the next that dies.

There's many a hand that's shaking,
And many a cheek that's sunk;
But soon, though our hearts are breaking,
They'll burn with the wine we've drunk.
So stand to your glasses! steady!
'Tis here the revival lies;
A cup to the dead already!
And hurrah! for the next that dies.

Time was when we frowned at others,
We thought we were wiser then;
Ha! ha! let THEM think of their mothers
Who hope to see them again:
Ho! stand to your glasses! steady!
The thoughtless is here the wise;
Here's a cup to the dead already--
Hurrah! for the next that dies.

Not a sigh for the lot that darkles,
Not a tear for the friends that sink;
We'll fall, mid the wine cup's sparkles,
As mute as the wine we drink:
Come stand to your glasses steady!
'Tis this that the respite buys;
Quaff a cup to the dead already--
Hurrah! for the next that dies.

There's a mist on the glass congealing--
'Tis the hurricane's fiery breath;
And thus does the warmth of feeling
Turn ice in the grasp of death:
But stand to your glasses! steady!
For a moment the vapor flies;
Here's a cup to the dead already--
Hurrah! for the next that dies.

Who dreads to the dust returning?
Who shrinks from the sable shore,
Where the high and haughty yearning
Of the soul shall sting no more?
No! stand to your glasses! steady!
The world is a world of lies:

A cup to the dead already,
And hurrah! for the next that dies.

Cut off from the land that bore us,
Betrayed by the land we find,
When the brightest have gone before us,
And the dullest remain behind,
Stand! stand! to your glasses, steady!
'Tis all we have left to prize;
One cup to the dead already--
Hurrah! for the next that dies!

[THOMPSON, 1835]

INDIAN REVELRY.

BY W. F. THOMPSON, ESQ.

We meet 'neath the sounding rafter,
And the walls around are bare,
As they shout to our peals of laughter,
It seems that the dead are there ;
So stand to your glasses ! steady !
We drink in our comrades' eyes ;
A cup to the dead already--
Hurrah ! for the next that dies.

Not here are the goblets glowing,
Not here is the vintage sweet ;
'Tis cold, as our hearts are growing,
And dark, as the doom we meet.
But stand to your glasses ! steady !
And soon shall our pulses rise ;
Here's a cup to the dead already--
Hurrah ! for the next that dies.

There's many a hand that's shaking,
And many a cheek that's sunk ;
But soon, though our hearts are breaking,
They'll burn with the wine we've drunk.
So stand to your glasses ! steady !
'Tis here the revival lies ;
A cup to the dead already !
And hurrah ! for the next that dies.

Time was when we frowned at others,
We thought we were wiser then ;
Ha ! ha ! let THEM think of their mothers
Who hope to see them again :
Ho ! stand to your glasses ! steady !
The thoughtless is here the wise ;
Here's a cup to the dead already—
Hurrah ! for the next that dies.

Not a sigh for the lot that darkles,
Not a tear for the friends that sink ;
We'll fall, mid the wine cup's sparkles,
As mute as the wine we drink :
Come stand to your glasses steady !
'Tis this that the respite buys ;
Quaff a cup to the dead already—
Hurrah ! for the next that dies.

There's a mist on the glass congealing—
'Tis the hurricane's fiery breath ;
And thus does the warmth of feeling
Turn ice in the grasp of death :
But stand to your glasses ! steady !
For a moment the vapor flies ;
Here's a cup to the dead already—
Hurrah ! for the next that dies.

Who dreads to the dust returning ?
Who shrinks from the sable shore,
Where the high and haughty yearning
Of the soul shall sting no more ?

No ! stand to your glasses ! steady !
 The world is a world of lies :
 A cup to the dead already,
 And hurrah ! for the next that dies.

Cut off from the land that bore us,
 Betrayed by the land we find,
 When the brightest have gone before us,
 And the dullest remain behind,
 Stand ! stand ! to your glasses, steady !
 'Tis all we have left to prize ;
 One cup to the dead already—
 Hurrah ! for the next that dies.

SONNET TO THE LAOCOON.

BY E. S. IRVINE, ESQ.

BEHOLD ! and shudder—human agony—
 Taxed to it's direst throes—is chiselled there,
 The force-dilated muscles heaving bare—
 The writhing hiss—the growing mastery
 Of the dread serpent's crushing volumery—
 The eye-balls starting in their frenzied glare,
 Horribly instinct with a Sire's despair,
 Who wildly strives his innocents to free
 From the death-clasp of those relentless coils,
 Who sees with prophet-glance the contest vain,
 Yet with the lavish might of madness toils—
 Behold and worship—the sublime of pain,
 The marbled Tartarus—the ideal fell,
 Where "Eblis" might forget his milder hell.

Authorship

William Francis Thompson (1808-42) was a youthful junior official of the Judicial and Revenue Department of the Bengal Civil Service. In September, 1831, he was appointed "assistant under commissioner of revenue and circuit, 7th or Humeerpore division" (<http://books.google.com/books?id=iw4oAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=editions:0dTay7cCy4UOD3Z7ZZ3RCy#PRA1-PA156,M1>), and in 1835 was promoted to "joint magistrate and deputy collector of Hissar, in Delhi territory" (<http://books.google.com/books?id=ci0oAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=editions:0dTay7cCy4UOD3Z7ZZ3RCy&lr=#PRA1-PA135,M1>). He must have studied both Arabic and Farsi (Persian), for he later published not only a learned review of the Arabic *Makamat* of Abul Feteḥ ul Hariri but also a translation of the *Farsi Akhlak-I-Jalaly* of Fakir-Jany-Muhammad Asaad.

Despite the appearance of "Indian Revelry" under Thompson's name in Calcutta in 1835, the poem seems to have circulated early as an anonymous piece; Thompson presumably wrote it during an outbreak of fever in 1834 or early '35. Its next known printed appearance, in the *New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator* of Feb. 9, 1842, is also anonymous. The text in the 1844 memoir (otherwise in French) of the English Lieutenant Edouard de Warren, *L'Inde Anglaise en 1843*, lacks both title and attribution, and the sixth stanza ("There's a mist on the glass congealing....") is omitted. De Warren recalled having heard the words sung at an English officer's drinking party in India in 1834; if the date

is correct, anonymous copies of Thompson's poem must have been in circulation among officers of His Majesty's 55th Regiment of Foot some months before its appearance in the *Bengal Annual*.



Bartholomew Dowling from *Irish Poets and Novelists*, published in San Francisco in 1892 and edited by D.O. Crowley.

Thompson's authorship of "Indian Revelry" seems to have been forgotten as the poem itself became more widely known, eventually to be set to music. Three stanzas were quoted without authorial attribution in an 1845 issue of the *Asiatic Journal and Monthly Miscellany* ("Jottings from My Journal," 520-21). The American sporting and theatrical paper, the *Spirit of the Times* (Nov. 19, 1853, 470), reprinted the poem from an issue of the *St. Helena Magazine* with its correct title but without the author's name (Pike, "East Indian Orgies"). The next discovered attribution is to a mysterious "Captain Dowling, East India Company's Service," in John Williamson Palmer's 1860 book *Folk Songs*. Palmer mistitles the poem, "The Song of the Dying." The attribution of the words to a "Dowling" soon became commonplace, and eventually the unknown "Dowling" was falsely identified as the Irish-American editor and versifier, Bartholomew Dowling (ca1823-1863). Bartholomew Dowling, however, was only about twelve years old when the poem first appeared.

Winstock (1970) reports that the song "was discussed in 1898 by the [British] *Navy and Army Illustrated*....One...anonymous correspondent asked on August 27 about the origin of a ballad said to have been sung in the Mutiny, and another...replied on October 1 that it had been composed in India by a Captain Darling [sic] who later died of cholera" (p. 186). Other sources cite an outbreak of "plague" or "typhus" as the occasion of the poem, which, in any case, suggests an epidemic fever (shaking hands, sunken cheeks, the "hurricane's fiery breath") rather than enemy action as relentlessly wiping out the drinkers one by one.

An ascription of the lyrics and/or the melody to the English poet Alfred Domett (rhymes with "comet") inexplicably gained transatlantic prominence in 1872. Domett's name seems first to have been connected with the poem by articles in the *New York World* and the *Chicago Times*. Domett, however, confided to his diary on Nov. 21, 1872 that "the oddest thing is the fathering upon me of the daredevil verses, the paper calls Revelry in India, which till I saw this paper I had never even heard of. As I did not choose to accept a merit (or demerit) which in no way belonged to me, I wrote a letter to the Editor of the *Chicago Times*, disclaiming the authorship of the lines in question--fine and spirited from a literary point of view as they undoubtedly are" The editor of Domett's diary notes also a story in the *Northern Express* (Newcastle), Sept. 27, 1872, citing the *New York World* as having attributed to Domett "the somewhat wild refrain of a camp song, written in Bengal during the cholera season. It is:- 'Then stand to your glasses steady,/ And catch the time as it flies;/ Here's a cup to the dead already,/ And a health to the next that dies!'" The *Chicago Times* version, which also connected Domett to the "the often incorrectly-quoted verses, commonly known as 'Revelry in India,'" claimed "Domett was in

India when he wrote the verses" (Horsman,ed., *The Diary of Alfred Domett 1872-1885*, pp. 63-65).

Apocryphal names formerly cited as the author of Thompson's poem, all supposed to be British army captains serving in India, include "Darling," "Dawling," "Rawlings," "Walter Dobenay," and "Captain Dobney of the Royal Bengal Fusileers."

REVELRY OF THE DYING.

Composed by a British officer in India, at a time when the plague was hourly sweeping off his companions. He did not long survive his wonderful production.

AIR—"Away with Melancholy."



1. We meet 'neath the sounding rafter, And the walls around are bare, As they shout to our peals of laughter, It seems that the dead are there. But stand to your glasses, steady! We drink to our comrades' eyes, Quaff a cup to the dead already, And hurrah! for the next that dies.

2 Not a sigh for the lot that darkles; Not a tear for the friends that sink; We'll fall 'midst the wine-cup's sparkles, As mute as the wine we drink. So stand to your glasses, steady! 'Tis this that respite buys; One cup to the dead already; Hurrah! for the next that dies.	4 Who dreads to the dust returning? Who shrinks from the sable shore? Where the high and haughty yearning Of the soul shall sting no more. Ho! stand to your glasses steady! The world is a world of lies; A cup to the dead already; Hurrah! for the next that dies.
3 There's a mist on the glass congealing; 'Tis the hurricane's fiery breath; And thus does the warmth of feeling Turn ice in the grasp of death. Ho! stand to your glasses, steady! For a moment the vapor flies; A cup to the dead already; Hurrah! for the next that dies.	5 Cut off from the land that bore us, Betrayed by the land we find, Where the brightest have gone before us, And the dullest remain behind. Stand! stand to your glasses, steady! 'Tis all we have left to prize; A cup to the dead already, And hurrah! for the next that dies.

"Revelry of the Dying" from *Carmina Collegensia* (1876).

Melodies

The melody featured in [The Dawn Patrol](#) appears as early as 1876. (It's rather like "The Eton Boating Song," [sample](#) [\(help·info\)](#) but it is not identical.) A secondary source (Bishop 1965) identifies one version's melody as "The Lost Chord," presumably the tune written by Sir Arthur Sullivan.

[Carmina Collegensia](#) (1876) identifies the melody as "Away with Melancholy," a tune reportedly based upon Mozart's "Das klinget so herrlich" in *The Magic Flute*. That melody, according to R. M. Marvin and D. A. Thomas, *Operatic Migrations* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006) "had been taken up as a popular ballad [sic] in England by the beginning of the nineteenth century, appearing in many printed editions as 'Away with Melancholy'" (p. 161). Its opening measures indeed resemble both "The Eton Boating Song" and the 1876 *Carmina Collegensia* tune, but the remainder of the melody moves in a different direction. Another once-popular English song, "The Horn of the Hunter," uses a melody very much like that given in *Carmina Collegensia* [\[1\]](#)

During and since the First World War the "Stand to your glasses" chorus has sometimes been attached to the airman's song "The Dying Aviator," which parodied and was usually sung to the tune of Whyte-Melville's Victorian song "Wrap Me Up in My Tarpaulin Jacket."

[[edit](#)] Annotated Appearances[[edit](#)] **Print & Internet**

[*18th Fighter Bomber Wing Songbook*](#). January 1, 1957. No publisher, no place. Two four line stanzas: "We loop in the purple twilight, / Spin down in the golden dawn / With the trailing smoke behind us / To show our comrades we've gone. / Stand to your glasses steady. / This world is a world of lies. / Here's a health to the dead already, / Let us drink to the next man who dies." No tune listed.

[*18th Tactical Fighter Squadron Blue Fox Songbook*](#). No Publisher, No Place, No Date [ca 1985]. One eight line verse. Part of the dedication.

[*335th FS Chiefs Songbook*](#). No Place, No Publisher, No Date [1991]. P. 32. "Stand to Your Glasses Steady". Four 4-line stanzas with an 8-line chorus. P. 37. "A Toast to Those Who Fly". Two 4-line stanzas. This is found in the toast section. This compiler of this songbook used some images which are also found in the [*18th Tactical Fighter Squadron Blue Fox Songbook*](#).

ADE, George. *Stories of the Streets and of the Town*, ed. Franklin J. Meine. Caldwell, Ida.: Caxton Printers, 1941. P. xxv: "Another meeting place [for Chicago reporters in the 1890s] was the Whitechapel Club...a rip-roaring place. The main feature was a spacious bar thrown across the front room, and built in the shape of a coffin. The chorus of the drinking song usually heard around this famous bar was: 'Then stand to your glasses steady / And drink to your comrades' eyes./ Here's a toast to the dead already/ And Hurrah for the next who dies!'"

Air Forces Airs. N.p. [Washington D.C.?], 1943. P. 94, two 4-line stzs. and chorus, words and arranged melody essentially those of The Dawn Patrol.

The Air Force Wives Website (www.airforcewives.com). As of Dec. 3, 2000. Text from 43rd Tactical Fighter Squadron, 1982. No tune.

ALDERSON, William A. *Here's to You*. New York: Dodge Publishing Company, No Date [1907]. P. 20. One 8-line stanza: "Who dreads the dust returning...". This toast book is only dated in the preface.

BAKER, George M. *The Handy Speker*. Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1876. P. 28, "The Song of the Dying," eight eight-line stanzas attributed to "Capt. Dowling."

BIGELOW, William P., ed. *Amherst College Songs*. Amherst, Mass.: Alumni Council of Amherst College, 1926. Not seen.

BISHOP, William Arthur. *The Courage of the Early Morning*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965. P. 109. Untitled. As sung in RFC; indicated tune is "The Lost Chord."

CARPENTER, Frank D. Y. *Round about Rio*. Chicago: Jansen, McClurg, 1884. P. 386 alludes to the poem, crediting it to a "British officer in the depths of the prison-pen."

COLUM, Padraic, ed. *An Anthology of Irish Verse*. N.Y.: Liveright, 1922. Pp. 251-53, "Revelry for

[sic] the Dying," attributed to Bartholomew Dowling.

CONROY, Pat. *The Great Santini*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976. Ch. 34 includes one eight-line stanza with a fictional description of its singing by U.S. Marine Corps fighter pilots in the 1960s.

CRAWFORD, Jack. *The Poet Scout*. San Francisco: H. Keller, 1879. P. 35 mentions a journalist's singing of "the famous camp song 'The Revelry of the Dying'" while attached to the 5th U.S. Cavalry in 1876. Buffalo Bill Cody was also present.

CROWLEY, Rev. D. O. *Irish Poets and Novelists*. San Francisco: pvtly. ptd., 1892. Pp. 42-43 insist (on the basis of "recollection" and that he was known to have written a poem called "The Relief of Lucknow,") that the Irish-born San Francisco journalist Bartholomew Dowling wrote "Hurrah for the Next That Dies!" Crowley calls the poem "strange" and "awesome," "the very poetry of military despair." Seven-stanza text on pp. 50-52.

CROWLEY, Mrs. Richard [Julia M. Corbitt Crowley]. *Echoes from Niagara: Historical, Political Personal*. Buffalo, N.Y.: Charles Wells Moulton, 1890. Pp. 254, quotes one stanza and notes from personal recollection that the song was a favorite of both N.Y. Senator Roscoe Conkling and Union General John A. Logan.

DAVIS, Burke. *To Appomattox*. [1959] Rpt. N.Y.: Popular Library, 1960. P. 48 quotes one quatrain said to have been sung in the Army of Northern Virginia in 1865.

DAWSON, Robert Price. *All My Laurels: A Novel of the Airborne in World War II*. N.Y.: Exposition Press, 1964. P. 134: "Stand by your glasses steady,/ Life is a round of lies;/ Here's to the dead already,/ And here's to the last man to die!"

DENNIS, Martin; Frank B. COLTON, and Joseph H. DULLES. *Carmina Princetonia*. N.Y.: W. H. Stelle, 1873. P. 27, four eight-line stanzas under the title "Stand by [sic] Your Glasses," set to a "New Arrangement" of the air elsewhere identified as "Away with Melancholy." The editors note that the poem was written "some years ago, during the prevalence of the cholera in India, by an English officer, Capt. Darling [sic], who himself shortly afterwards fell a victim to the dread scourge." The song and the accompanying note reappear in editions of *Carmina Princetonia* until at least that of 1914.

DIVES, William. *A Bundu Boy in Bomber Command*. Victoria, B.C.: Trafford, 2003. P.196. Fragment, partly "The Bold Aviator," as sung in RAF, WWII.

DORAN, Dr. [John]. *Table Traits, with Something on Them*. N.Y.: Redfield, 1857. Pp. 265-68 summarize relevant passages from de WARREN and reprint his text.

Dracula. (1931, dir. Todd Browning). Classic vampire film includes a few lines of the lyric quoted as a "toast" by Frances Dade in the role of Lucy Weston.

DUNN, Theodore Douglas, ed. *Poets of John Company*. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1921. Pp. 49-51, "Indian Revelry," by William Francis Thompson (1808-1842), followed by two further poems of Thompson's, "The Jogi's Address to the Ganges" and "The Rajpoot's Lament."

EMERSON, Edwin, Jr. "San Francisco at Play," in *Selections from Sunset Magazine* at website of the

Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley [\[2\]](#). Written 1906 concerning the recent San Francisco earthquake, incl. the first four lines of the poem, slightly altered and referred to as "Revelry of the Dying."

Epidemic Cholera: Its Mission and Mystery, Haunts and Havocs, Pathology and Treatment. New York: Carleton, 1866. Pp. 10-11, [Image:Song of the Dying by Captain Dowling in Cholera Epidemic.gif](#) titled "The Song of the Dying" attributed to "Captain Dowling" [sic]. The author of this book is listed as "A Former Surgeon Previously in the Employ of the Honourable East India Company".

FAGAN, W. L. *Southern War Songs: Camp-Fire, Patriotic and Sentimental*. N.Y. : M. T. Richardson, 1890. P. 317: "The Toast of Morgan's Men." One 8-line stz. attrib. to "Capt. Thorpe, Ky." Confederate Brigadier General John Hunt Morgan (1825-64) of Kentucky is almost unquestionably alluded to in the title; his cavalry raided Indiana and Ohio in July, 1863.

FITTS, James Franklin. "Facetiae of the War," *The Galaxy*, Sept., 1868, p. 320. Quotes prominently the quatrain ending "And a cheer for the next that dies" and characterizes the song, which Fitts heard sung in the Union army, as a "wild fantastic chant."

GARRISON, Fielding H. *John Shaw Billings: A Memoir*. N. Y. G. P. Putnam's, 1915. P. 35 quotes from a letter written by Lt. Billings in 1863 that mentions regimental officers singing at a drinking party the "battle song of which the chorus is 'Then stand to your glasses steady,/ We drink to our comrades' eyes,/ One cup to the dead already/ And Hurrah for the next who dies.'" Billings was a medical officer with the 11th U.S. Infantry, Army of the Potomac.

GETZ, C. W. "Bill," ed. *The Wild Blue Yonder. Vol. 1*. San Mateo, Calif.: Redwood Press, 1981. Pp. S19-S21. The original poem in eight 8-line stzs. plus two USAF versions said to antedate WWII. P. A7 [sic] gives a Korean War version of "The Bold Aviator" with "Stand to your Glasses" stanzas added as in Wallrich.

GILLING, Helen. "Open Questions," *Current Literature*, Jan., 1905, p. 95. Besides giving the entire poem with attribution to Bartholomew Dowling, notes its appearance in six poetry anthologies under various titles, incl. "The Revel (East India)," "Indian Revelry," "Our Last Toast," "Revelry of the Dying," and "Song of the Dying."

HADLEY, Arthur Twining. *Some Influences in Modern Philosophic Thought*. New Haven: Yale U. P., 1913. P. 106 quotes the final quatrain, attributed to "the cholera-stricken officers in Ceylon," as exemplifying the "one message more than another with which modern English poetry is charged,...[the] message of enduring loyalty." At the time of publication, Hadley was President of Yale University.

[HAYES, William Allen, ed.] *Selected Songs Sung at Harvard College, from 1862 to 1866*. Cambridge, Mass.: pvtly. ptd., 1866. Pp. 94-96: "We Meet 'Neath the Sounding Rafter," eight 8-line stzs. without attribution.

"HAZARDOUS LEMON." *Stand to Your Glasses*. [\[3\]](#). As of Jan. 31, 2007. Wyndham-Read and The Druids' recorded version of the song presented against newsreel footage of World War I. Viewed more than 7,600 times by Dec. 5, 2008. A poster comments, "Superb. I have seen guys die in battle. This is how they still sing and live."

HICKOX, Chauncey. "The Author of a Remarkable Poem," *The Literary World*, May 8, 1880. p. 160. Rptd. from the *Washington Evening Star*, Nov. 15, 1879. Notes that "Revelry in India" has been "a favorite poem with the newspapers of America" for about twenty-five years and that its author was identified in the 1850s as Alfred Domett, though the poem does not appear among Dommett's collected works. "Some collections of poetry have erroneously credited it to Capt. Bartholomew Dowling."

[HOGG, James, and Thomas PRINGLE]. *The Poetic Mirror: Or, The Living Bards of Britain*. London: Longman, 1816. pp. 275. [Reprint, 1817. P.20](#). The opening poem, "The Guerilla" is an "imitation" of Lord Byron by James Hogg (see Hogg's autobiography [here](#)). Stanza 34, p.20, reads "Alayni rose and waved his hand on high,— / All silent sat before that face so grim ;" / A health!" he cried, and follow'd with his eye / Till every cup was fill'd unto the brim; / He beckon'd short—each look was turn'd on him," / Here's to the dead and those that soon must die." / Gan every eye and every brain to swim, / As up they raised the cup, without reply," / Here's to the dead," they said, "and those that soon must die!" This is the earliest example discovered of any version of the "Here's to the dead..." toast.

HOPKINS, Anthony. *Songs from the Front & Rear: Canadian Servicemen's Songs of the Second World War*. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1979. P. 120. Two stanzas and chorus.

HORSMAN, E. A., ed. *The Diary of Alfred Domett 1872-1885*. London: Oxford U. P., 1953.

HUNTER, Alexander. *Johnny Reb and Billy Yank*. [1904] N.Y.: Neale Publishing Co., 1905. Pp. 349-50: "Through burning verse which thrills us we follow English soldiers [in India] in their banquet song." Gives 4-line chorus with "Drink to your fair lady's eyes."

HURLEY, Vic. *Jungle Patrol: The Story of the Philippine Constabulary*. N.Y.: E. P. Dutton, 1938. P. 294 mentions "that poem by Bartholomew Dawling [sic] which is known to every officer of the Constabulary."

"Hurrah for the Next that Dies!" *Ballou's Monthly Magazine*, June, 1882, p. 569. Eight 8-line stanzas. Credits the poem to "Captain Bartholomew Dowling, an Irish officer in the English service," who "died almost before the echoes of [the refrain] had ceased to reverberate; and in less than a week" all his brother officers had also succumbed to "the plague."

HYDE, James Nevins. "Two Stone Walls, From a Seaside View," in [Alfred T. Andreas, Charles W. Davis, and William Eliot Furness,] *Military Essays and Recollections*. Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1891. P. 463, a former U.S. Navy surgeon mentions the song's popularity among the officers of the sloop-of-war USS *Powhatan* in 1864.

"Indian Revelry." *New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator*, February 9, 1842. Page 3 prints an eight-stanza text without attribution; it contains some verbal changes from the text in the 1835 *Bengal Annual*. See [\[4\]](#) for a very poor OCR'd version of the original.

JENKINS, Dudley. *Toasts and After Dinner Speeches*. Philadelphia: The Penn Publishing Company, 1933. P. 184. Titled "DEATH: Up with your glasses steady / This world is a world of lies / Quaff a cup to the dead already / And here's to the next man that dies."

JOHNSON, Owen. *The Varmint*. N.Y.: Baker & Taylor, 1910. P. 298 associates "that whispered toast [i.e., the four lines including "This world is a world full of lies"] which is the acme of devilment" with

Princeton.

JONES, James Edmund, ed. *The University of Toronto Song Book*. Toronto: W. R. Draper, 1918. An earlier edition, not seen, appeared in 1887. P. 133, five 8-line stzs. with melody "Away with Melancholy."

"Jottings From My Journal," *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Miscellany*, N.S. IV (1845), pp. 513-521. The article's author is identified only as "A Medical Officer of the Bengal Establishment." On pp. 520-21 he gives three eight-line stanzas, including that beginning "There's a mist on the glass congealing," omitted by de WARREN in his printing of the poem. Perhaps even more significant, a footnote indicates that the poem had appeared earlier in the *Bengal Annual* in 1834 - the year that de WARREN claims he heard the song sung.

KIERAN, John, ed. *Poems I Remember*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran, 1942. Pp. 449-51, "Revelry of the Dying," eight 8-line stanzas attributed to "Bartholomew Dowling (1823-63)." Kieran, a well-known journalist and radio personality, adds that he learned the poem "almost entirely by ear through attending championship athletic contests of all kinds in company with H. Grantland Rice [sports writer and author of "Casey at the Bat"]....When noted athletes were falling fast in the fierce waves of competition, Mr. Rice would give off this poem in full voice while the admiring bystanders would 'stand to their glasses, steady,' as advised in the stirring verse."

KING, Horation C. "Songs of the Rebellion," *Morning World-Herald* (Omaha, Neb.), July 7, 1893, p. 2. Recalls "Revelry of the Dying" as a favorite song of officers of the First Cavalry Division, Army of the Potomac, in 1865; quotes the first and last stanzas and identifies the tune as "Away with Melancholy." Also prints words to a derived song written by two fellow officers.

KYLE, James. "The Abbeville Kid." *BBC- WW2 People's War*. Dec. 8, 2003. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/stories/67/a2117567.shtml>. Six 4-line stzs. of "The Airmen's Lament," a combination of "The Bold Aviator" and "Stand to Your Glasses," as sung during WWII by RAF fighter-bomber pilots in Europe.

"The Last Carouse," *Morning World-Herald* (Omaha, Neb.), Aug. 13, 1904, p. 4. Eight 8-line stanzas rpt. from the *Chicago Chronicle*.

Lexington Rifles. [5] "Toast of Morgan's Men," one 8-line stanza attrib. to "Capt. Patrick H. Thorpe, Adjutant of the 2nd Kentucky Cavalry" during the Civil War.

LICHTENSTEIN, Joy. *For the Blue and Gold, A Tale of the University of California*. San Francisco: A.M. Robinson, 1901. P. 145: one stanza ending "Three cheers for the next man who dies!"

LOMAX, Alan, ed. *The Folksongs of North America in the English Language*. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1960). P. 444 reprints Wallrich's Korean War version, set to "Tarpaulin Jacket" tune and erroneously dated "1954." Discussion on pp. 431-32.

Lyr Add: Revelry of the Dying, circa 1800. [6]. Give-and-take by folksong performers and enthusiasts of the Mudcat Discussion Forum; includes some variant stanzas.

MADISON, Janet. *Toasts You Ought to Know*. Chicago: The Reilly & Britton Co., 1908. P. 154. One 4-

line stanza. "Then stand to your glasses steady, / And drink to your comrade's eyes; / Here's a coup to the dead already, / And hurrah for the next that dies!"

MAIBAUM, Richard, and Frank NUGENT. *The Red Beret*. Film, 1953 Two stzs. sung to "Red River Valley." British Airborne, WWII.

MEACHAM, A. B. *Wigwam and War-Path*. Boston: J. P. Dale & Co., 1875. P. 519 mentions U.S. soldiers singing the song during the Lava Beds War of 1873. Four-line "refrain" is given.

MORSE, D.A., M.D. "Digestion." *Cincinnati Lancet and Observer*, N.S. XII (Feb., 1869), pp. 65. P. 79 quotes two stanzas of the "bacchanalian song" by "Capt. Rawlings" [sic].

MURPHY, Kathleen, and Richard T. JAMESON. "You're Goddam Right I Remember," in Scott BREIVOLD, ed., *Howard Hawks: Interviews*. Jackson, Miss.: U. P. of Mississippi, 2006. Pp. 253-54, Hawks explains how he learned the song he featured in *The Dawn Patrol*.

OVERTON, Gwendolen. *The Heritage of Unrest*. N.Y.: Macmillan, 1901. P.278. One 8-line stanza; the song is identified as "The Last Carouse."

OYEN, Henry. *Gaston Olaf*. N.Y.: George H. Doran, Co., 1917. Novel of the lumber industry. P. 76: "'Oh, fill up your glasses steady,/ And hold up your glasses high./ Here's to the dead already,/ And here's to the next man to die.' Ha, ha!...Who's going to be next?"

PALMER, John Williamson, ed. [*Folk Songs*](#). New York: Charles Scribner, 1861. Pp.233-235. Titled "The Song of the Dying". Attributed to "Captain Dowling, East India Company's Service." This is the earliest "Dowling" attribution and the earliest appearance of the poem in an anthology. The book is copyrighted 1860.

PARKER, G. "Queries: Author Wanted," *The Antiquary* IV (Nov. 29, 1873), p. 263. "A military friend, lately returned from India," gave Parker a manuscript copy of this song and others. It impressed Parker "as being unique in its ghastly merriment." He inquires for its title and the name of the author. The 7-stz. text is identical to de Warren's but for two or three words, most notably "the dullest are *left* behind."

PARSONS, Edwin C. *I Flew with the Lafayette Escadrille*. [1937] Indianapolis: E. C. Seale, 1963. Pp. 248-49. 4 stzs. as sung during WWI. No melody.

PETERSON, Ralph L. *Fly a Big Tin Bird*. Victoria, B.C.: Trafford, 2000. P. 100. Mention of an eccentric officer who annoyed U.S. squadron mates by singing the song in WWII.

[PHILLIPS, A. L. M.]. *Anecdotes and Reminiscences of Service in Bengal*. Inverness, Scot.: Courier Office, n.d. [1878]. Pp. 124-25, Phillips, who did not arrive in India till 1846, records his belief that the "verses," which he quotes from, were written near Secunderabad by "Captain, later Colonel, Johnstone, president of an officers' 'Hell-Fire Club.'"

"PIKE." "East Indian Orgies," *Spirit of the Times*, Nov. 19, 1853. P. 470: "Indian Revelry," clipped by the correspondent from an undated issue of the *St. Helena Magazine*. Eight anonymous 8-line stanzas. "Well written," says "Pike," "though rather strong....Not as bad...as the old West India toast, 'a bloody war and a sickly season,' and...certainly far more poetical.' In the appended clipping, the editor of the

St. Helena Magazine writes, "The following terrible song is hardly an exaggerated representation of the feelings of many officers of the East India Company when communication between India and England was very slow, and a return home hardly possible, except at the close of an officer's career." He believes that the feelings described in the song led many such officers into "intemperance" and personal ruin.

"Religion and Society in India," *The Church of England Quarterly Review* VII (1845), pp. 79-114. A discussion of de WARREN's book. P. 108 quotes two stanzas of the song, "born of a bad boldness, itself the offspring of the deepest hell." It is "replete with demoniacal genius and devilish ferocity," and the singers "outraged decency, and defied God" to divert their thoughts from the death that threatened them.

"Revelry in East India," *Littell's Living Age*, Oct. 18, 1856, p. 150. Eight anonymous 8-line stanzas rptd. from the *Boston Courier* with ultimate credit to the *St. Helena Magazine*. The *Courier* squib mentions subsequent appearances in the London *Spectator* and other journals. "This poem gives, with wonderful effect,...however painful, the very poetry of military despair, but still the *dying together* of brothers in arms."

"Revelry of the Doomed," *The Daily Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco, Calif.), Jan. 4, 1865. Eight eight-line stanzas credited to the "St. Helena 'Magazine'" and "Capt. Dobney of the Royal Bengal Fusileers."

"Revelry of the Dying," *Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco), Jan. 9, 1862. P. 4: Seven 8-line stanzas. "Supposed to have been written in India at the time the army was being mowed down by the pestilence, by an English officer, who did not survive his wonderful performance."

"Revelry of the Dying," *Half-Dime Singer's Library* (N.Y.: Beadle and Adams, 1878). Cited at Albert Johanssen et al., *Index of the Songs in Beadle's Song Books 1858-1870* [sic] [\[7\]](#); not seen.

"Revelry in Indi(an)a," *Puck*, May 27, 1908, p.2. A topical 4-line parody of the most famous lines.

ROSSER, Harold C. *No Hurrahs for Me*. Sevierville, Tenn.: Covenant House, 1994. Pp. 65-66. 3 stanzas with "Eton" melody. Ref. to Burma, 1944. (In Dedication note:) "Sung after the death of each buddy."

RUNCIMAN, James. *Skippers and Shellbacks*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1885. English seafaring novel. P. 93: "Now, my bully boys, all get ready,/ We'll be stiff when the sun shall rise;/ And here's to the dead already,/ And hurrah for the next that dies."

SHAARA, Jeff. *To the Last Man*. N.Y.: Random House, 2004. P. 185 of this historical novel of World War I quotes one four-line stanza of the song.

"SHANE NA GAEL." *Irish Toasts*. New York & London: H.M. Caldwell Co., 1908. P.99. One stanza: Ho! stand to your glasses steady! / 'Tis all we have to prize. / A cup to the dead already, -- / Hurrah for the next that dies!

SHAY, Frank. *Drawn from the Wood*. N.Y.: Macauley Co., 1929. Pp. 51-53 of Gold Label Books reissue. Three 8-line stanzas titled "Stand to Your Glasses," with melody ("The Eton Boating Song"). This is "reputed to have been composed and sung by a British garrison in India which was being wiped

out by cholera."

"The Song of the Dying," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, Feb. 26, 1859. Eight eight-line stanzas credited to the *Boston Courier* and "Captain Dowling of the East India Company's service. The editor places it in "the last century": "a regiment being infected, and the officers and soldiers dying with frightful rapidity, the remaining officers shut themselves up in their messroom, determined to die as they had lived - together. Like the doomed fraternity in the opera of 'Lucrezia Borgia' they gave themselves up to a ghastly carousal while the poison circulated in their veins, and died, grasping each other's hands, with half-drained goblets before them...."

STEVENSON, Burton Egbert, ed. *The Home Book of Verse, 1580-1912*. N.Y.: Henry Holt, 1912. Part VIII, pp. 3338-3340, "The Revel: East India," attributed to Bartholomew Dowling. This may well have been the last printing of the poem in any major English-language anthology.

STEVENSON, William. *Spymistress: The Life of Vera Atkins*. N.Y.: Arcade, 2007. P. 130: "When comrades were lost, RAF aviators [in World War II] gathered around the piano, quaffed beers, and sang this lament: So lift up your glasses steady,/ Let's sing in this vale full of woe,/ Let's drink to the dead already,/ And here's to the next to go."

[STIMSON, Frederic Jesup.] *Guerndale, an Old Story*. N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882. Novel. P. 121: "[T]hat song of the British soldiers in India, when the pestilence was upon them and there was no escape...was a favorite song in my time in college: 'For God's sake let no bells be ringing,/ Let tinkling glasses be my prayer--' With the refrain, strengthened by much pounding of the table and clinking of glasses: 'Here's to the dead already,/ And hurrah for the next that dies!'"

Strijdkoor Kontrarie. [8] as of Feb. 12, 2007. "Sounding Rafters," seven four-line stanzas from version performed by Coope, Boyes, and Simpson, credit to Bartholomew Dowling for the lyrics and Alfred Domett for the music. Translates English text into Dutch.

[SWEETSER, Charles H.; Henry Hull GOODELL, and George G. PHIPPS, eds.] *Songs of Amherst*. Northampton, Mass.: The Class of '62, 1860. Pp. 34-35. Five 8-line stanzas, "Revelry of the Dying. Air: Away with Melancholy." Note: "Composed by a British officer in India, at a time when the plague was hourly sweeping off his companions. He did not long survive his wonderful production."

THOMPSON, W[illiam]. F[rancis]., Esq. "Indian Revelry." In David Lester Richardson, ed., *The Bengal Annual, A Literary Keepsake, for MDCCCXXXV* (Calcutta: Samuel Smith & Co., 1835), pp. 123-25. The earliest known printing of the original poem. Many thanks to Rena McGrogan and Jill Brown of the Fisher Library, University of Sydney, for locating and providing a copy of this key text.

TRIDENT SOCIETY, The. *The Book of Navy Songs*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., 1926. Pp. 48-49 as "The Last Carouse." 8 eight-line stzs.: "'The Last Carouse' was written years ago at the time when the Plague was raging in India. It bears a certain depressing note due to the tragedies revealed but the magnificent spirit and swing of it make it well worthy of its adoption by the Navy." (p. 49). No lyricist or composer credited. With melody, which is precisely that sung in 1938 "Dawn Patrol." Like all other songs in book, "arranged and harmonized by Joseph W. Crosley, Organist and Choirmaster of the United States Naval Academy" (title page).

WAITE, Henry Randall, ed. [*Carmina Collegensia: A Complete Collection of the Songs of the American*](#)

Colleges, with Selections from the Student Songs of the English and German Universities and Popular Songs Adapted to College Singing. Boston: Oliver Ditson & Co, 1876. P.76 gives five 8-line stanzas with melody [music](#). Song is titled "Revelry of the Dying" with the melody identified as "Away with Melancholy". "Composed by a British officer in India, at a time when the plague was hourly sweeping off his companions. He did not long survive his wonderful production."

WALLRICH, William. *Air Force Airs*. N.Y.: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1957. No melodies.

_____. "U.S. Air Force Parodies Based upon 'The Dying Hobo.'" *Western Folklore*, Vol. 13 (No. 4), pp. 236-244. Version collected in Korea, 1952. No melody.

WARD, Ed. "Revelry in India." *Notes and Queries*, Series 8, VI, July- Dec., 1894, pp. 504-505. Disputes the attribution to Bartholomew Dowling, citing Dowling's brother to the effect that Bartholomew had never claimed its authorship.

WARD-JACKSON, C. H., and Leighton LUCAS. *Airman's Song Book*. London: Sylvan Press, 1945. Pp. 3-4 offers four 8-line RFC stzs. of "The Bold Aviator," the last stz. being from "Dowling's" poem. Melody: "Tarpaulin Jacket." Date given as "Before the First World War." P. 14, "An R.F.C. Toast," consists of two 8-line stzs. from the poem. "Sung in many R.F.C. messes in France...[s]ometimes...to the air of Sir Arthur Sullivan's 'The Lost Chord.'" No alternative melody given.

de WARREN, Edouard. [L'Inde Anglaise en 1843](#). Paris: Au Comptoir des Imprimeurs-Unis, 1844. The poem in seven eight-line stanzas, in English, appears without title or attribution in the book, ch. 18, pp. 348-51. De Warren (1811-98) served in India as a Lieutenant in His Majesty's 55th Regiment of Foot. He recalls first hearing the song at an officers' drinking party during an outbreak of cholera in camp and attributes it to "one of the final victims." De Warren's text lacks entirely the stanza beginning "There's a mist on the glass congealing." It is followed by a translation into French.

WATERS, Margaret. *Toasts*. Chicago: Brewer, Barse & Company. 1909. Unpaginated (approx. half way through the book). This reads: "(Toast drunk by an Irishman during the cholera epidemic in India): Stand to your glasses steady / And drink to your comrades' eyes; / Here's a cup to the dead, already, / And hurrah for the next that dies."

WEED, Truman. *Carmina Concordiae: A Collection of the Songs of "Old Union" with Music and Pianoforte Accompaniment*. N.Y.: W.A. Pond, 1875. P.141: five 8-line stzs. Earliest printing with a melody.

WINSTOCK, Lewis. *Songs and Music of the Redcoats*. Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1970. P. 187, "Here's to the Last [sic] to Die," rpt. with melody ("Away with Melancholy") from *The Scottish Students Song Book* (1892). Eight 4-line stanzas with 4-line chorus of "So stand to your glasses steady," etc. *The Scottish Students Song Book* text replaces two of Thompson's original stanzas with entirely new ones. Despite the title, the phrase "the last to die" does not appear in the body of the song. "Particularly lugubrious...a fine example of the Victorian penchant for morbidity"(p. 186).

ZWICK, Jim, ed. "Revelry of the Dying," in *"The Empire Days We Long to Relive": Songs of the Military Order of the Carabao*, [\[9\]](#), in Jim Zwick, ed., *History Illustrated*, [\[10\]](#) (Aug. 20, 2007). Two 8-line stanzas (the first and final of the original poem), as printed in a 1913 collection of songs sung by U.S. Army officers who had served in the Philippines.

[\[edit\]](#) Recordings

BRAND, Oscar. *One Hundred Proof Drinking Songs*. Arabesque 6534, 1985. Track #12. "Stand to Your Glasses." Same melody as on *Out of the Blue*.

_____. *Out of the Blue*. Elektra Records EKL178, 1960. Track #13. "Stand to Your Glasses." [sample](#) ([help](#)·[info](#)) [Six four-line stanzas](#), all but the last from "The Bold Aviator." Unique, strongly minor melody.

_____. *Wild Blue Over Vietnam*, N.p., n.d. [ca 2000]. Track #19. "Stand to Your Glasses." [sample](#) ([help](#)·[info](#)) [Six four-line stanzas](#). Same melody as on *Out of the Blue*, identified here as "The Dying Sailor," allegedly from the "17th century."

COOPE, BOYES & SIMPSON. *Twenty-Four Seven*. No Master's Voice B000068QT6 (2002). Track #7, "Sounding Rafters." Not heard.

JONAS, Dick. *Itazuke Tower*. Erosonic, 1997. Track #9. "Stand to Your Glasses". [sample](#)

_____. *Soul of the Warrior*. Erosonic, 2006. "Stand to Your Glasses," a World War I "Spad & Camel" version, with melodic influence from "Poor But Honest" in the chorus. Mellow nightclub style with dreamy sentimental jazz guitar.

A Night at the Bar with the Boys. Bear Spluge Productions, 1982. Four 4-line stanzas of a USAF version.

PHILLIPS, U. Utah. *I've Got to Know*. Daemon Records, 1991. "Stand to Your Glasses," unaccompanied. Preserves "Dawn Patrol" tune and chorus, otherwise entirely rewritten though said to be "from World War I."

THRELFALL, Jane, and Amanda THRELFALL. *Morning Tempest*. Beehive Music WBCD001. (2000). "Here's to the Last to Die."

WYNDHAM-READ, Martin, and The Druids. *Songs and Music of the Redcoats 1642-1902*. Argo ZDA 147. 1971. "Here's to the Last to Die." Six stanzas and refrain from Winstock's book sung in harmony without accompaniment.